3. (twice amended) [The] A game ball [as claimed in claim 1] having increased resistance to moisture absorption comprising a natural leather cover disposed over a lining, the leather of said cover having increased water resistance properties distributed throughout during a tanning process, wherein when said ball is subjected to six 45 minute cycles of [the] a rain test and said ball is permitted to dry at approximately 70°F for 24 hours between cycles, said ball contains an amount of water at the conclusion of each said rain test cycle as expressed as a ratio of the weight of the ball with absorbed water to the weight of the dry ball, [the] an average per cycle ratio at the conclusion of said six rain test cycles [is] being a maximum of [1.15:1] 1.19:1.

5. (twice amended) The ball as claimed in claim 1, wherein the lining is coated with at least one water resistant polymeric material selected from the group consisting of [vinyl,] epoxy, polyester and urethane materials.

6. (twice amended) The ball as claimed in claim [1] 5, wherein the lining comprises a fiber reinforced sheet-like material with water resistant properties.

8. (three times amended) A game ball with increased [moisture] resistance to moisture absorption, said game ball comprising an inflatable bladder, a natural leather cover disposed over and surrounding said bladder, the leather of said cover having increased water resistance properties distributed throughout during a tanning process, and a lining disposed between said bladder and said cover, wherein when said ball is subjected to six 45 minute cycles of a rain test said ball will absorb an average per cycle water gain of a maximum of 90 g of water at the conclusion of said sixth rain test cycle.

11. (amended) A [water resistant] game ball having improved resistance to water absorption comprising a cover of natural leather having a treatment to impart improved